

GRINDING Hait



the

THE
WALL

PATRICK FITZGERALD

WRECKLESS
ERIC



slits

MEMBERS

CRAMPS

MEAN STREET

ATLETICO
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GRINDING HALT - THE KIND OF CRAP THAT TALKS BACK.

Ladies & Gentlemen, How do?

My turn to write the editorial, and God knows what I'm supposed to say? Why the hell have you paid 20p. for this? Short of bog paper? This isn't anything to do with your life, and it's only a dilution of mine! Be yourself! Think for yourself! Live for yourself, don't just follow another trend around like sheep! Why should I hurt my brain thinking up all this meaningful (?) crap for you? For christ's sake get in touch and prove you can think and formulate your own opinions. You want to know what's inside? Find out for yaself ya lazy git!

STAY FREE,

E.S.

P.S. The Indos are coming (?)

P.P.S. Mark & Don are innocent!

SINGLES

THOSE NAUGHTY LUMPS - DOWN AT THE ZOO EP (Open Eye Records). Four, new catchy, humorous tunes from the Naughty Lumps. 'Ice Cream' is first, followed by 'Down At The Zoo' and both are built around a strong, effective chorus. Side two contains 'I'm Gonna Die, which takes a light-hearted view of death and is probably my favourite. 'Love Is A Reflex' ends the EP wick, although not as good as their debut, 'Iggy Pop's Jacket', is still worth getting. <.<

CULT FIGURES - IN LOVE (Rather). Three tracks that justify the Figure's growing popularity - an interesting, light fun sound, undemanding without being unnoticeable. E.S.

APARTMENT - THE CAR (Heartbeat). Stop/go chorus that doesn't quite come off as well as it might, but this is a promising single and the overall effect is of a competent, catchy tune. B-side is fairly average. <.<

DONKEYS - NO WAY (Back Door). Although not quite as good as 'What I Want' which was one of the best singles of last year, this is still great, smooth rocking number. Watch these pages for more on the Donkeys - interview next issue (we hope). E.S.

VIPS - CAUSING COMPLICATIONS (Gem). Some people might call this modern pop - I call it plain wet - totally lacking in power or aggression. Tries desperately to be catchy, but instead is just irritating. <.<

YACHTS - THERE'S A GHOST IN MY HOUSE (Radar). This time they have resurrected an oldie, and the Yachts again prove themselves to be purveyors of the most light and pure pretension-free pop available. E.S.

ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN - RESCUE (Korova). This is the second single from the Bunnymen, and although neither have really been stunning I feel that they could well have something up their sleeves that could be really great. This is better than its predecessor, but still lacking in something - life - they sound thoroughly bored with the whole thing. Other than that I can't think of anything else to say. <.<

THE SCARS - THEY CAME AND TOOK HER (Pre) After a very promising debut single, this is a massive let down - thick, unappealing, slow, boring, it drags its feet like Joy Division with a headache! E.S.

STIFFS - INSIDE OUT (EMI). Explosive beginning, drums and then it's into a whirling verse and an effective, but not over-powering chorus. Probably one of the best singles I've reviewed this issue - poppy but still aggressive and well worth looking out. <.<

ATHLETICO SPIZZ '80

SPIZZ, The final frontier, to boldly go where no man has gone before.....

The support group where absolutely laughable, their particular lack of originality or character particularly shown up in comparison with Athletico Spizz 80. The band (I don't know their name, and don't care) were headed by a female lead singer, and featured a sax. player who apparently added absolutely nothing to the sound at all. The latter left after the first number, and I wished he had taken the rest of the group with him, but he soon returned for the rest of a long and boring set. I don't think I need to comment on the fact that they didn't get an encore!!

However, no-one was really worried about the support band, 'cos we'd all come for one thing - Athletico Spizz 80, and after a long wait, and an intro tape (the theme tune from Star Wars), the group charged in a line, Spizz himself coming on last to much applause. Touched and Rythm started the set off, but it was not until the third number, Amnesia, that the crowd really got going. Central Park and No Room were followed by a version of Cold City, which, although not as sophisticated as on the E.P. ted as on the E.P. crowd going again.

The rest of the set was new numbers, which, presumably will become more familiar with the release of their first album. If so, I can see nothing but praise coming for that L.P. on the evidence of the songs they played tonight.- Intimate, New Species, Effortless, Hot Deserts, with Red and Black and Where's Spock leading up to a magnificent end. As it was clearly the more familiar songs that were most popular throughout the evening, it was obvious that a final volley of Soldier Soldier and Where's Captain Kirk? would send us all crazy, although these two classic numbers were separated by an impromptu rendition of their live fave and singalong number Clocks Are Big, Machines Are Heavy. Of course, this finale achieved what



it was clearly designed to do, and Athletico Spizz 80 got two encores, including Virginia Plain, and, if my memory serves me correctly, Where's Captain Kirk? again.

No-one could have been disappointed with tonight's performance. The group proved how much more reliable and secure this line up is than its predecessors, and they also proved themselves to be great entertainers, particularly Spizz himself, who pranced up and down the stage like a demented ballerina, as well as playing guitar, tom tom, and forcibly taking over the drum kit at various times during the evening. Really, his instrument was the audience, and he played it with skill, building up a great rapport without any appearance of condescension. Anyway, a great evening, and a great bunch of guys who really deserve all the success that's coming their way.

E.S.

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UK ALBUMS, UK SINGLES, USA DELETIONS, UK 12"ers, IMPORT ALBUMS, SINGLES, 12"ers
AND GRINDING HALT

COCKNEY

The Cockney Rejects must be one of the most earthly, solid punk bands to have arisen in the last couple of years,

and one of few to present punk in the way it should be heard. Nowadays bands use all sorts of gadgets which detract from the spontaneity and simplicity of the music. The Rejects, however resist this and are writing and playing songs in the way groups did some three years ago. This is what they had to say after their set supporting Slaughter:

GH: Is the new single ('Greatest Cockney Rip Off') a reference to Jimmy Pursey?

Micky Geggus: No, well it's a bit of a piss take really, like he goes round calling himself the great cockney cowboy and all that but he never goes near the place, y'know what I mean?

GH: Did you have an argument with him?

MG: Yeah, a bit - let's drop it though 'cos he isn't really worth it. I've had enough of him.

GH: How did you feel about the press the album got?

MG: Well, I was happy with the album and that's all that really matters to me. I reckon it's a good album, and that's good enough for me, the press ain't all that important - Gary Bushell gave it a good write up though.

GH: How did the Gary Bushell ^{how} come about?

MG: Well, basically I sent him a tape and he liked it and it all went from there. But he had to choose between writing and managing and he chose writing 'cos you can't do both properly at the same time.

GH: Why is no-one credited on the album?

Nigel Woolfe: The guy who played on the album was bought out and so they didn't have to credit him. £200 was all it cost to buy him out. I arrived too late to have anything on the album. It was too late to do it all again so no-one was credited.

GH: Why did you choose EMI?

NW: They choose us. Someone came to one of our gigs and liked us and it all went from there.

GH: How do you get on with them?

NW: Well, they're really great to work with, they give us everything we want and they're really generous and helpful.

GH: Why did you leave Small Wonder?

Vince Riordon: Well, they're a bunch of wankers, always trying to rip bands off, all this talk about them being good 'cos they're a small company is crap. Small Wonder are only interested in Crass who are a bunch of bloody hippies - crap. We've no regrets about choosing EMI. A lot of bands go around saying its best to be on a small label and all that, but that's a load of bollocks really. You hear about how EMI treated the Sex Pistols and all that, but they're great really. Other groups only say small companins are best 'cos the big ones aren't interested in them and won't give them amajor recording contract.

GH: Do you have any particular musical influences?

NW: Well, Micky and Stinky are influenced by God Save the Queen and all that stuff.

GH: How did the Rejects ~~we~~ get started?

NW: Well, Micky and Stinky used to be in a band called the Shitters then Vince came in from the Deadflowers and then me from Back To Zero.

GH: Are you pleased with the way the album's been selling?

NW: Yeah, very pleased. It's outsold Sham's first two albums already, and I think that's really great.

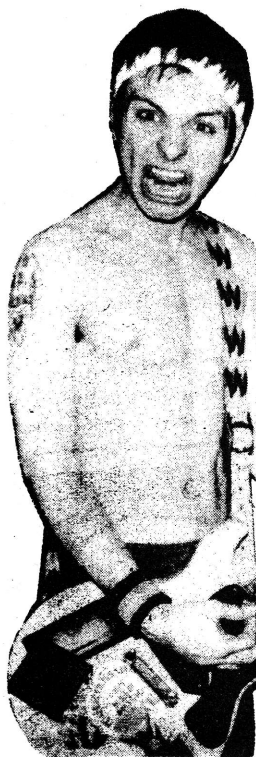
GH: What exactly happened about Jimmy Pursey?

NW: Well, he'd come in and start telling everyone what to do and he'd try to change things, to how he wanted them, and not how the band wanted them to be and they just told him to fuck off.

GH: Have you been asked to do TOTP?

NW: Well, do it when we get asked. And Tiswas - I'd love to go on Tiswas.

REJECTS



COC NEY REJECTS

GH: Why were so many dates cancelled on your recent tour?

VR: Simply because they thought there was always trouble at our gigs.

GH: Is there?

VR: No, not really...well, you saw tonight - when have you seen so many punks and skinheads in one hall, and there was only one fight, which we sorted out ourselves. But there isn't much violence at our gigs at all. A lot of people say skins are violent, but the ones who follow us around are quite peaceful really.

GH: A lot of bands that started off in the early days of punk have changed musical direction, like the Clash, and many have become more commercial. Can you see this happening to the Rejects?

MG: No, I hope not. I Can't see any reason why we should. We'll just keep on going as we are.

And on that optimistic note we left it - lets hope they keep to their work, for I would hate to see the Rejects energy suppressed, and for them to follow the same course as many other Punk bands, that arose before them.

PATRIK FITZGERALD

P
BULMERCHE

Local group, Bullseye, were supporting. At first everyone stayed in the bar, but they soon began to drift into the hall. They went down well, and they certainly provide good fun, and both they, and their audience seemed to enjoy themselves, which is what matters most really. However I found their music to be uninspired and dull. There's room for improvement, but they do have potential.

Patrik Fitzgerald was, to put it bluntly, BORING. Most of his songs showed little variation, and he was dull to watch. One man playing a guitar, standing almost motionless doesn't exactly provide a good spectacle. I do like some of his songs, especially 'Trendy' (although he didn't even play that), many of which tell the stories of harsh reality. His lyrics are certainly very good, but his music is often boring, and unimaginative, with just the odd tune standing out as being anywhere near exciting. I can listen to his records alright, but only in small doses, and when you get some three quarters of an hour of it like this it really turns me off. Buy his records by all means (He needs the money - he couldn't even afford a copy of GH!), but I think it best to stay clear of his live shows, although, on the other hand I seemed to be one of the few that thought this way, as he was given an encore. Make your own minds up. <<<

'WRECKLESS ERIC'

YMCA, Tottenham Court Road.

Eric bounded on the stage to an audience which had been expecting him for some time, and proceeded to give them a memorable evening. The songs came thick and fast, linked together by drummer Dave Otway's frantic beat. Old and new were all there. Songs from the new album were strong - the new single 'Broken Doll' was delivered with great vigour, while 'A Pop Song' had a strong bassy feel. The balls of R 'N' B are very much in evidence. This band is amazingly together, strongly supporting Eric who frantically drove the band to the limit. 'Semaphore Signals' came nearer to its original atmospheric feel as Eric played his guitar better than ever before live, while 'Reconnex Cherie' still sounds good. 'Tonight Is My Night', 'It'll Soon Be The Weekend' stood out from the new album, almost equalling the intensity of his old classics. A new song, apparently called 'Just A Little Bit More', was the encore - we were slightly disappointed that there was no second encore, but it was a night to remember.

Living is a cliché, it's all been done before, 'Lost' Johnny Speed.
Death is the only thing we've got left to live for.

U.K. SUBS

BRAND NEW AGE

In recent months I have felt helpless, as I saw the 'Subs slipping into the abyss of H.M. which has sucked up so many hard-core Punk groups in recent months. Warhead saw them holding onto the brink by their fingernails, but just when all appeared to be lost,

the 'Subs again discard guitar solos for a blistering 40 - minute burst of white - hot anger and frustration.

No-one, I hope, would claim that the 'Subs are a particularly inspired group, just reliable / predictable. In fact, here lies a dilemma:- do I praise them for their ability to turn out reliable punk thrashes seemingly by the yard, or do I criticise the predictability of it all?

My first reactions to this album were disgust at the artwork, and noticing that, as only 2 tracks here are previously available, it is far better value than the last 'Subs' l.p. You Can't Take it Anymore is an effective opener as it slowly builds up, with one component of the sound being added one after another, until finally Charlie Harpers distinctive tone takes up the droning repetitive title line, which is the complete lyric of the song. The title track comes next, and like many of the songs here concerns suspicion with technical advancement, and suspicion of the coming decades' innovations. Public Servant, Warhead and Barbie's Dead have little of note about them, Rat Race sees the pace starting to pick up a bit, and side one ends in a blaze of power with 'Organised Crime'. From this we get the instant quote - 'There's a man who sucks your cigarette, there's a man who sucks your cock - he's a government official...' Vicious Stuff EH?

Still I get this little nagging voice in the back of my head saying it's all predictable and meaningless. All the anger has been sucked out to make it safe for big business to capitalise on. There are, after all, so many groups yelling equally frustrated and impotent themes, but the 'Subs have a sheer forcefulness and conviction about them which elevates even the most uninspired and unoriginal tune. As I plough on into side 2 with Emotional Blackmail, the excellent Kicks, Teenage, Dirty Girls, 500 C.C., Bomb Factory, I suddenly realise what it is that the 'Subs have that is lacking from a lot of stuff today, energy - all the 'Subs need to do is channel this blind energy into a useful path and we should see them resolve all their problems and go rocketing to the top. E.S.

The Slits

RETROSPECTIVE BOOTLEG LP

This could be the first real punk album of all time, on the other hand it could be a complete waste of time and vinyl - the sound quality is terrible so half the songs are unidentifiable, and some of the songs can only be described as plain lousy. The whole thing is presented in as uncaring and unprofessional as possible.

And yet through the roughness and crudeness of the whole thing, some aspects shine with power and beauty, as if the album was an uncut diamond - and that is probably the best way of viewing it - terrible quality, certainly not the clean, healthy reggae sound of 'Cut' and yet the sheer magic and power of these girls cannot help but shine through.

This is, as I said, real, hard, crude Punk - not the controlled bottled aggression of the Subs or the thoughtful and calculated viciousness of the Pop Group, but unconcerned and ignorant bravado, totally devoid of sophistication or anything to comfort you. E.S.

THE POP GROUP

FOR HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE HAVE TO TOLERATE MASS MURDER? E.S.

Before I start this review I must make it clear that I am not by any means a Pop Group fan, and I was expecting the whole of the record to be as impotent and hysterical as its title would suggest, but I have found the Pop Group's music much more effective in the context of an album than on a single.

The opening track, 'Forces Of Oppression' is, as I said, more powerful than I expected - fairly enjoyable in fact with tribal drumming and hoarse, strained, almost hysterical vocals. 'Feed The Hungry' is recommended only for its heavy rhythmic drumming, the guitar being erratic and uncontrolled and the vocals no more than a monotonous chanting. 'Out of Many' features wild keyboards and rather funky singing and thankfully gives way to 'Blind Faith' which is smoother and more controlled, falls into chaos, but all falls back into place and is redeemed in the end. 'How Much Longer' follows to end side one. Side two is very much the same - 'Justice is spontaneous and unreliable, 'There Are No Spectators is slow and quiet. Then follows 'Communicate' and 'Roba Bank' E.S.

There were few mourners as this album was laid to rest; recommended for PIL fans and other junkies.

THE MEMBERS

1980 - The Choice Is Yours

Yes, the Members still do exist! During the past year or so they seemed to have virtually disappeared off the face of the earth, with only one single being released. 'Sound of the Suburbs' was a Top 20 smash; it's follow up, 'Offshore Banking Business' was relatively unsuccessful, and then it was all over - the Members' 15 minutes was virtually only that. But in a spurt of activity the Members are back - a new single, a new LP and an extensive tour. This is therefore a crucial period for the Members, whose infectious reggae influenced punk I find irresistible. Anyway enough of this drivel...

Like the first album this starts off with an instrumental - 'The Ayatollah Harmony', which is typical of the Members' catchy rhythms. 'Goodbye To The Job' follows, which is built around a solid chorus, and although not quite as good as most of the material on the first album, is still very good. In fact that seems to be the case throughout - all the songs are great, but they could be better, and as good as it is, I can only feel disappointment with this album. 'Physical Love' is followed by the single, 'Romance' - a song that deserved to do a lot better than it did. On 'Brian Was' Nicky Tesco's vocals are really soft for the most part, climaxing in an uproar, and this song has really got me hooked. It's a delicate song, but that doesn't mean it's lacking in power. 'Flying Again' is again brilliant and very reminiscent of the excellent debut album.

If we flip over we find 'Normal People' to open side 2. Again a great song, but not quite realising its full potential. However from this point things really start to move - Larry Wallis' 'Police Car' - everybit as good as the original, if not better, followed by 'Clean Men', which sounds a bit like the Members' attempt to cash in on the current ska revival, with a heavy brass section, but it's still branded with that typical Member' sound, although it's undoubtedly the worst track on the album. This is followed by

two Members' classics - 'Muzak Machine' and 'Gang War', the former a heavy rocker, the latter a slower, more melodic song, which tells frighteningly realistic tales of violence.

So, although not up to expectations, this is still a bloody good album, which gets better and better towards the end, so that you're really disappointed the album has actually come to an end. It isn't likely to set the world alight, but it should be enough to maintain interest and make sure the Members don't disappear completely - and that would be a tragedy.

<.<.

So, the one Uncle John's been waiting for. After a few listens my impressions were that this was generally a weaker album than their

debut, but I now have no doubts about this album whatsoever. The opener is 'More Songs About Chocolate And Girls', which has a catchy riff that plays throughout and eats its way into your mind until it finally takes you over. 'There Goes Norman' is faster, and probably the nearest thing to the first LP on this album. The title track 'Hypnotised', follows. This is one of the least immediately appealing of the tracks, but after a few more listens I can't get it out of my system, as hard as I try. Things slow down again for 'See That Girl', which has a punchy rhythm that knocks you to the floor in one blow. 'Whizz Kids' is followed by 'Under the Boardwalk' - one of the Undertones' 'romantic' numbers, with a slow verse, and faster chorus, with Feargal Sharkey's voice much softer than usual for the most part. 'The Way Girls Talk' is similar in style, but by no means the same, and still very effective. 'Hard Luck' closes side one; drums start to roll and then the guitar joins in, but the drums remain prominent throughout and are used to good effect to form what is another great number.

THE UNDERTONES HYPNOTISED

Side two: 'My Perfect Cousin' you all surely know - that forceful chorus and the lyrics that are impossible to resist. 'Boys Will Be Boys' is next - the rest of the group echo their voices around Feargal Sharkey's as he brings the message home loud and clear. 'Wednesday Week' follows 'Tearproof' and is undoubtedly the most untypical Undertones song yet to emerge - tender vocals backed by gentle guitar playing which at first sounds really wet, until you realise just how effective this song is. 'Nine Times Out of Ten' again slightly untypical of the Undertones, but as catchy as ever with whirling guitar to finish. 'Girls That Don't Talk' is the penultimate number and the album ends with 'Whats With Terry' - light guitar playing provides the intro with sporadic hard drumming and then the Undertones break into yet another great number.

The Undertones are the ultimate in modern pop and by the way things are going at the moment they look like being a major force in the '80s and deservedly so - miss them at your own peril.

<.<.

I'M just a vision on your TV screen,
Just something conjured from a dream.

the slits

It would have been easy to do a straightforward interview with the three girls, but we wanted to look at things from a different angle so we spoke to drummer, Bruce, but so as

not to leave the girls out, we also had Tessa in on the interview. The fact that she said relatively little would seem to indicate that the opinions of Bruce were those of the whole band.

GH: Would you say that the Slits are moving towards a heavier reggae sound?

B: Not consciously. We're not moving towards any sound, not consciously. We're not thinking, right, this is what we're going to sound like. No, I wouldn't say we are. It's not the way to play music - not in terms of what you think it should sound like - you just play it, and that's influenced by a lot of things - things you read, things that happen to you, all kinds of stuff. Alright, we listen to a lot of reggae. We've listened to reggae for a long time, and we still do, though I don't as much as I used to. I wouldn't really have thought that the new single was a heavier reggae sound. I don't know.

GH: When will the next official studio album be out?

B: I don't know. We're taking our time. Instead of recording an album all at once, I think we'll be recording tracks at a time, in kind of bursts, rather than doing it all at one moment. Instead of spending about five weeks in the studio, which is fucking boring really, I'd rather do it in bits and then piece it together. I think you get bogged down when you're in the studio for weeks on end.

GH: Why did you decide to release the official bootleg?

T: Because there's some good stuff on it. And it's not a bootleg - it's called a retrospective album, but it's not a serious album at all.

B: A lot of people have been going on about the quality, but people don't have to buy it, for Christ's sake. They go on about it, they say how terrible it is and it's a waste of time, but they don't have to buy it - they're not obliged to at all. If they want to buy it they can, if they want to break it up afterwards they can. It doesn't matter. It's just there. It's there to be heard.

GH: Do you think it's at all relevant to what the Slits are doing today?

B: No, but that doesn't matter. The Pop Group one will be the same. Well, that in a way may be more relevant to what they're doing, but no, no, it doesn't make any difference whether it's relevant or not. I mean, what you did yesterday isn't relevant to what you're going to do tomorrow, 'cos you don't know what's going to happen anyway. You can't decide what's going to happen anyway, 'cos someone else is doing it for you.

T: It's just a really casually put out album.

GH: Why did you leave Island?

T: Oh God! We've been asked that so many times!

B: They're fools.

T: It's unimportant why.

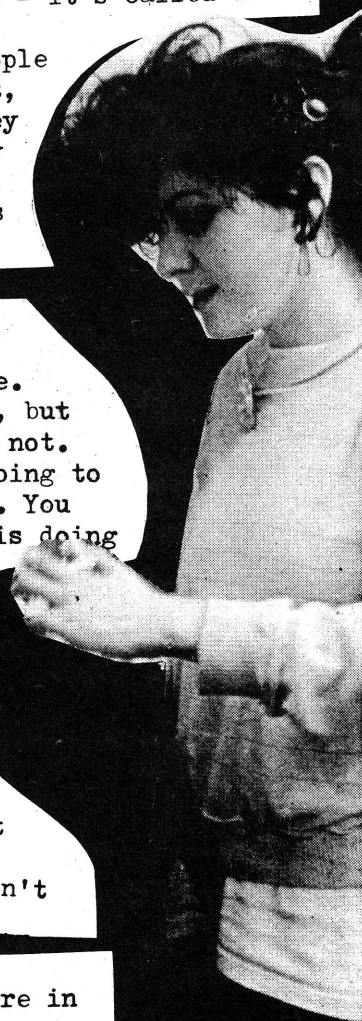
GH: For ages you were going on about how great they were and that they were just what you wanted....

T: Yeah, they were, but some things just don't last, and they don't go right, then you move on to something else.

GH: Why did you decide to form Y Records?

T: So that we can deal with who we want. So that we can say we're in charge.

B: So that we have a seat, y'know, so that we can make the decision on what's being put out.



the slits

GH: How did the connections with Rough Trade come about?
B: They're nice people, and we get on with them. They do things the way we like it. They're not too worried about profit margins.

GH: Why were there two different groups on the last single, - why didn't you release two separate singles instead?

B: Well it's two different bands, and two A sides. We wanted to do it as some kind of gesture, to show that there was an affinity between the two bands, and that was the way of demonstrating that. Also it will introduce Slits fans to the Pop Group and vice versa. We don't want to keep people in their tiny little holes.

GH: How has it sold compared to 'Typical Girls'?

T: It's Number One in the alternative chart. It doesn't matter if you sell more if you're on an independent label, 'cos it still won't get in the charts.

GH: So although Typical Girls appeared to sell better, it didn't...

B: You could sell 400,000 records, but will it be in the BBC charts? Not a chance. It wouldn't even appear, 'cos they're not sold in chart return shops. I'd really like to do that - to sell 400,000 records and still not be in the BBC charts, because all those charts are there for is so that people can compete against each other, so they can say "Oh, I'm higher in the charts than you"

GH: How satisfied were you with the single?

B: It's alright. As soon as you've done something it's alright - you can do something better all the time. You never say "Yeah, this is really brilliant, we've achieved what we wanted to do".

GH: Would you say it was better than anything on 'Cut'?

T: Let's just say it's different.

B: I don't know. Obviously it's worth being very critical of yourself, but it's not worth saying "Well, we've done something that's better than that", because at the time you did it, it was the best you could do. But there's nothing wrong in playing something a bit different, and running from one side to the other, like playing Heavy Metal, then playing ~~Rock~~ ^{Funk} ~~for you~~.

GH: Whose singing 'No More Rock And Roll ~~heroes~~' on the new album?

T: That's Subway Sect.

GH: From moving from a big company to an independent aren't you regressing rather than progressing - most groups do it the other way round.

B: Most groups get a big record label and they figure on using the record company. You see, by doing it this way, when people buy the record, it's as we want it to be. Whereas however much you can say you might be manipulating a label, what they're doing is making fucking money out of you and that's all they're interested in. They might pamper you and they might say how great they think you are and give you everything you want, but they're only doing it 'cos they're gonna make lots of money out of you. They don't care otherwise. Now, that doesn't bother me. We could handle being on a big record label, I'm sure we could. It's also easier in the sense that you don't have to argue with these fat arseholes who sit in their offices all day, 'cos we decide what to do.

GH: What's happening about the Slits's drummer?

B: I play drums for both bands, at the moment.

GH: Are the Slits looking for another drummer?

T: No, we've given up.

B: It's alright 'cos I'm getting bionic parts fitted next week.

Bruce picks up on the subject of Y Records again....

B: It's not really a desire to be independent though, it's because this way we can get it out and we'll know that it's getting to people as we want it to be. And we can license it out, 'cos Rough Trade haven't got the distribution of other companies in places like Japan and China - and all the company will do it press it and put it out and they don't do anything else.

GH: Why did Budgie leave?

T: I can't really remember, he just seemed to drift away.

And from that point the interview started to drift away into a series of irrelevant uncoordinated statements, so I won't bore you with the details, And anyway, I'm running out of space.



THE CURE

SEVENTEEN SECONDS

The album starts with a very weak and very insignificant piece of keyboard playing, called 'A Reflection' - a very inauspicious start for what I find a very inauspicious album. As they break into 'Play For Today' it is obvious that the album is going to be in the slow, weak, mysterious style of 'A Forest', rather than the instant pop-appeal of 'Boys Don't Cry', 'Jumping Someone Else's Train' and the first album, 'Three Imaginary Boys'. 'Play For Today' is, actually one of the better tracks on the album, but all sound very much the same - slow, heavy and monotonous, leaden drum beat, throbbing bass, twinkling guitar and mysterious/silly fiddley bits on the keyboards and those wining vocals. 'Secrets' and 'In Your House' are both fairly undistinguished tracks. 'Three' is a fairly good point to end side one on - the same sort of stuff as the others, still too slow, and I can't hear any vocals except a ghostly whisper in the background, but it's a lot heavier than the others.

Horrible, pathetic, ghost noises like you'd expect on a low-budget horror movie, and entitled 'The Final Sound' give way to the not classic, but distinctive, opening line of 'A Forest', instruments joining in one after another - this sounds a lot more like what the other tracks should have sounded like - the ironies of having this in the chart, when stuff like 'Boys Don't Cry' got no where is best left well alone, by me at least.

Things definitely start to look up here - 'M' is a more instant style, 'At Night' is slow again, but more bearable than 'A Reflection', 'Secrets', or 'The Final Sound', and the title track 'Seventeen Seconds', rounds off the album fairly reasonably.

It is difficult to be fair about this album, as I find myself distracted from its good points through sheer disappointment at its failure to live up to the Cure's great potential. Anyway, I won't give it stars, but I'll just say, if you like 'A Forest', then you'll probably like this (I can't say fairer than that can I?) and from the number of people who apparently do, I can only deduce that I just don't appreciate it, 'cos it hasn't even grown on me!

E.S. THIS ALBUM IS THE
'BEST THIS DECADE' SO

THE CORRECT USE OF SOAP THERE

****½/*****

FR

MAGAZINE

Call them pretentious if you must (Oh, alright then - C.C.), but Magazine are still a fascinating group, and this is a fascinating album - it is everything that 'Secondhand Daylight' should have been, and not as threateningly pretentious as 'Real Life', it sees Magazine as real people, with Howard Devoto not only singing, but singing almost well! All the songs are very good - all similar enough to fit well in together, but different enough to each have its own, distinctive character. I would like to go in depth into each song, but I shall refrain, (You're just a lazy sod - C.C.) saying only that as every song comes on, you think "this is the best" - in retrospect the opening volley of 'Because You're Frightened' and 'Model Worker' is formidable, and 'Sweetheart Contract' is the only real weak spot. All in all an impressive and formidable album.

E.S.

The Fall

TOTAL'S TURNS

As most of these tracks have already been released before there's not much point in going into great detail 'cos if you're a Fall fan then you'll know them already, and if you're not you're probably not interested anyway - the Fall are a band you either love or hate.

There are no new tracks on Side One, which includes 'Fiery Jack', 'Roche Rumble', 'Muzorewi's Daughter', 'In My Area' and 'Chock Stock'.

Side two opens with 'Spectre Vs Rector' and then there are three new tracks, none of which are up to the Fall's usually high standards. The first is 'Gary Grant's Wedding' and is one of those slow/fast sort of songs, but the change in tempo is a bit to frequent for me, and I don't know whether I'm coming or coming. 'That Man' sounds like a rip off of the theme from 'Happy Days' - yes I did say Happy Days - but the Fall have stamped it with their own distinctive style and it turns out to be a great piss-take. 'New Puritan' is probably the worst Fall track ever - like Alternative TV on a bad day. The final track is the classic 'No Xmas for J. Quay'.

So 10 tracks, 7 previously released, but the presentation of the songs is different enough to make this a worthwhile buy for a Fall fan as it presents the Fall as they should be heard - spontaneous, rough and LIVE. It would be easy to criticise the fact that so many songs are already available, but that's the vase with most live LPs - in fact most live LPs contain nothing but material that is already available.

<<

THE WALL

Why is it that we nearly always seem to introduce our interviews with apologies? I ain't going to apologise for this! The Wall were in Reading and they're a good group so we decided to do an interview with them. Any other questions? The Wall are Kelly (vocals); Nick (Guitar); Andy (Bass); and Rab (drums). Now let's get on with it -

GH: How, why and when did you start?

Rab: Andy's the only original member left so he had better answer that...

Andy: We started the October before last. We were all in separate bands, then they all split up and so we formed the Wall, and we cut the first record six weeks later.

Rab: The band started off with the EP - they made that at the Wallsend studio - that's where the name comes from as well. But then they decided to move to London, and the guitarist and drummer didn't want to so it was only me and the vocalist. Then I joined - I met them on the Patrik Fitzgerald tour, 'cos I was Patrik Fitzgerald's drummer and they were the support - I was hired out, and the contract was only for seventeen dates, so when the tour finished, I joined them.

Andy: Rab was one of the original members of the Pack, and I think he was in PIL for about a week.

GH: How did you manage to get the first record out so quickly?

Andy: Well there was this bloke who really liked us, and he got run over in a road accident. Anyway he got £5000 compensation and he gave us £200 to make a demo, we made the demo and took it around everywhere. We went to Rough Trade and they said they'd like to release a single, but they didn't have enough money, so we went to Small Wonder and they said they'd do it. We then practised for 6 weeks solid so we were tight, and then recorded it.

GH: Why did you sign to an independant label?

Andy: Well, if anyone had come up and offered us a deal then we'd have just signed it - we weren't really bothered, we just wanted to get records out and go on tour, and that's all we want to do.

GH: How did you feel when you heard Small Wonder were going to fold up?

Rab: A bit shocked, but I don't think they'd have done anything else with us anyway. But they're a good label, they've helped a lot of groups.

GH: What's happening about recording now?

Rab: We've just got a deal with Fresh records in London, and we'll be making an album and single real soon.

Kelly: We don't know what we'll call the album, but the single's going to be called 'Gateway', that's definite.

Rab: What we've always wanted to do is put an album out, 'cos then you can get more gigs.

Kelly: We might even make a bit of money as well, 'cos out of exchange we got about 25 quid each, and from the EP about 15 'cos it didn't get reviewed at all, it just sold by word of mouth.

Nick: But it's all so much up to the music papers, especially in London, 'cos if they say you're good then you're the people to go and see, and if the papers say you're crap then no-one comes. Like, we had a two page write up in Sounds some time back, and all these kids started to come and see us - we were really trendy for about two weeks, then it all faded away. We went on the Upstarts tour and when we got back no-one wanted to know anymore. It's all so manipulated, who goes to see who.

GH: How did you feel when they all stopped coming?

Andy: Sick. We got gigs really easily then, and we sold out at the Hope and Anchor, but a week later we couldn't get any gigs, and that still goes now - we can't get gigs in London. If they'd have kept coming we'd have probably got signed up about six months ago and we could have had an album out now.

GH: What do you write your songs about?

Nick: Anything that's in our heads at the time.

Kelly: the music's changing now 'cos we all write songs now so the songs are all different.

GH: Has John Peel been of much help to you?

THE WALL

Rab: Not session wise, but he's plugged the single a bit - in fact

I think We're the only Small Wonder band who haven't had a session!

Andy: We sent him a tape with about five songs on it and we asked him what he thought, and he sent his secretary down and she said we were good, but hard luck y'know, you can't have it, which is funny 'cos all the other Small Wonder bands have had one as Rab said.

GH: How did the connection with Steve Jones come about?

Nick: He came to see us at a gig, then he offered to produce us after he'd seen us, which was before the 'Exchange' single. He still keeps saying he's going to produce us again in the future, but that's a load of bollocks - we haven't done anything with him since and we haven't seen him since.

GH: When we talked to the Cockney Rejects a couple of weeks ago they said Small Wonder ripped bands off and they were a bunch of wankers....

Kelly: Where would they Cockney Rejects be without Small Wonder? They were the label that launched them.

Andy: The guy that runs the label has helped a lot of bands and he's a good guy. I think he's thinking of doing a compilation album with his favourite Small Wonder tracks on it. I think we'll have a track on it - the first single - he didn't like the second so much. I thought the second was weaker as well. It's much more powerful live. He's just about the only straight bloke we've met. I don't know what the Rejects were talking about.

GH: How big a following do you have now?

Andy: We've a bigger following up north. The further north you go the bigger following we've got. In London it's all the electronic stuff innit?

GH: What are your plans as far as gigs go at the moment?

Andy: Well, we've got no manager now, 'cos our last one, he was promising us the world y'know. He said he'd put us on the Slaughter and the Dogs tour, the one that's just past. We thought great, y'know, sure. Then he said "I'll tell you what lads it would be better if you did the Subs' tour instead, 'cos there are more dates" Great, we thought. But nothing came out of that, so we asked him if he had got us any other gigs. "Oh, we've got a gig in Reading - maybe, but it isn't definite", so the day before he rings me up and goes "Uh, have you got the PA yet?". And I hadn't 'cos he hadn't confirmed it, all he said was that we might be playing, so we couldn't get one in time. He kept making all these promises, like the Subs' tour, and nothing ever happened. We really thought we'd be on that tour. So we do it ourselves now, and we're organising small dates, like this, for say £100 a night, which'll just be enough to get us to the next gig, and we'll live like that. When we did the 'Upstarts' tour that was for £25 a night and we had a quid a day to spend and we just lived in the van for two weeks, just driving about. And we're quite happy living like that.

GH: Would you describe yourselves as a punk band?

Rab: No - we're just a new wave band.

I suppose that's as good a point as any to end an interview. Anyway watch out for the Wall's new single and see 'em live if you can - see C.C.'s gig write up elsewhere for a rave review of their live performance!

E.S.



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51144 LITTLE FINGERS

THE STRAPS

HAMMERSMITH ODEON

ANOTHER PRETTY FACE

The Straps kicked the evening off and they were a good taster of what was to come. The lead singer sported a Captain Sensible jumper and a kilt, and looked, to say the least, ridiculous. Their songs showed a fair degree of originality and they were fairly interesting to watch, although they did seem a bit out of place in such a big venue - they'd make a very good garage band. I got the chance to see them at a smaller venue, only a couple of weeks later at the Monday Club - you can read about that later. For now, I'll tell you a few titles - 'Brixton', 'What's On The Box', 'News of the Day' and 'Violence Sex Disaster'.

Another Pretty Face were next on and best forgotten. The least said about them the better, although I must say they were treated very badly by Virgin, who dropped them so suddenly. But if they want to attract further record company interest they'll have to do better than this.

After a relatively short break Stiff Little Fingers took the stage. They opened with 'Gotta Getaway' and 'Straw Dogs' and then ploughed through the majority of the songs on the new album - 'Wait and See', 'Nobody's Hero', 'Bloody Dub', 'Doesn't Make It Alright', 'No Change' and the classical 'Tin Soldiers'. All the singles were included plus a few off the excellent debut album - 'Barbed Wire Love', 'Johnny Was', 'Breakout' and 'Wasted Life'. I would have liked to have seen them play more from 'Inflammable Material' but I won't grumble about it too much. Each number was delivered with the energy and forcefulness that has made SLF one of the premier punk groups around today. Henry Cluney showed great enthusiasm, rushing about the ample stage with determined resolution. Jake Burns was also lively as was Ali McMordie. Jim Reilly did little to add to the visual effect, though his drumming cannot be faulted. For their silly encore they played 'Riders In The Sky' which was, as you might expect, silly. There was really only one thing missing that would have made this gig outstanding. It was nothing to do with the band for they were exemplary. It was in fact the audience (Notable absence of punks by the way) - they were boring. There was no pogoing mass of bodies at the front as you might expect. It wasn't that the bouncers were so efficient - the audience were so lackadaisical. Still, full credit to Stiff Little Fingers for turning in a great performance. <.<.

MO-DETTES & SPIZZ & TENPOLE TUDOR

Tenpole Tudor are a peculiar group to say the least. The music was solid and quick. Tenpole kept mentioning singles in between his songs but none of what he said really made much sense. They were trying to recapture the image of the Pistols in music and dress, but somehow they didn't seem to fit in with the precise quality of Spizz and the Modettes. What's more no one seemed to know who they were, but eventually all was revealed when someone yelled "Who the hell are you?". "We Are Tenpole Tudor" came the proud reply. The most amusing song had to be 'Who Killed Bambi' when Tenpole tried desperately to do the job of all the orchestra alone - he failed.

Athletico Spizz 80 followed soon after and didn't put everything into their set, although it was still very enjoyable. They went through most of their favourites, but their set was very disjointed. They had no song list and conferred at the end of each song to decide on another. They managed to squeeze in a version of 'In The Navy', and the encore was a song about the Mo-dettes with such sophisticated and profound lyrics as "There's Kate...sitting on a gate" and "Jane...you make me swoon" - hot stuff eh? Overall Spizz were a little disappointing but still as 'special secret guests' they were good to watch and played with their own original style.

The Mo-dettes on their special first birthday party started off rather badly. They lacked the energy and confidence shown at the Moonlight Club a few weeks earlier, but they soon settled into the swing of things.

A good set that naturally included their brilliant debut single and its b side, and they promised us another in the near future. In the meantime I can satisfy myself with the free flexi disc given away at the gig of their very popular live number 'Twist and Shout'. Unfortunately this lacks the energy and enthusiasm it gets live, but who's complaining?.

The first birthday party went off well, and the audience seemed happy. I'm sure all of us here at the GH factories look forward to hearing more from the excellent Mo-dettes in their next year.

R

WRECKLESS ERIC

You may remember a gig review in No. 3 by guest writer Derm the Sperm. Well, he didn't like that name, so he will now be known as 'Lost' Johnny Speed (??? - C.C.), so although it says this article is by 'Lost' Johnny Speed, it's really Derm the Sperm. So now you know. (Sorry Derm!) (Just get on with it - P.S.).

Anyway, Derm the Sperm, sorry, I mean 'Lost' Johnny Speed didn't write an introduction so it's straight into the interview....

GH: How do you rate the response to your 'Big Smash' album? First critically and then in sales terms?

WE: I don't know what you probably think of as criticism....I don't take some sort of petty, personal attack by a half-baked sort of excuse for a journalist as criticism. As far as other reviews go, I just don't read 'em, y'know. There was one that I did read, and that's one guy that's getting seen to in no uncertain terms. People slag us off, and we just send 'em honorary membership of the fan club. As far as sales go it's been great.

GH: Has the album been issued in America yet?

WE: No, it hasn't, but it will be soon. It'll be on Stiff/Epic. We formed Stiff records in America to put my last album out there.

GH: You weren't too happy with the last album were you?

WE: No, not the last English album - 'The Wonderful World'. That was the 'Wonderful World of Pete Solley'.

GH: How much control do you have over records issued by Stiff?

WE: If I've got the make an album, we decide on the producer, and then we have to go and record it, and unless it's a complete out and out disaster, which they didn't really take the 'Wonderful World' to be, it gets released.

GH: So you decided on Pete Solley to produce the last album!

WE: No, I didn't no. I think they probably realised they had made something of a mistake afterwards, but it was alright, y'know. It just didn't have any balls in it. Bazza was a great choice for the new album. They chose him while I was away, knowing he was a friend of mine, and he was into doing the thing right. I don't think they actually thought he would listen to what I said, but he did. So the songs came out just as I intended, and not like some sort of producer's dream.

GH: Why did you go to Stiff?

WE: Stiff Records were a new company, they had a lot more of a human side, which they've still got actually, than the other record companies which would mould the product. There's a lot more heart in it y'know.

GH: Is it more of a family atmosphere then at Stiff?

WE: The people that I know there, the people that work in the office, that is a sort of family, although I don't think a lot of people have got much time for Rachel Sweet. I see Lew Lewis and bits of his band occasionally. They're great chaps y'know. I don't fraternise with Dury or anybody. He's always away somewhere having a trauma as far as I can tell.

GH: What were you doing before you went to Stiff?

WE: I'd been at art school for about 4 years, and after that I had, between becoming a professional musician and leaving art school, something like 50 sort of menial jobs - warehouse work, just moving boxes about, unloading trucks, stuff like that..washing up in a restaurant. My last job was toilet cleaning for Tarmac Roadstone in Greenwich. I lasted two days. I remember in the winter of '77, that was after I'd been to Stiff, being on the roof of the National Theatre, which they were putting plays on in while they were still building the thing. I was working on the roof, painting steel girders inside a cooling tower. It was fucking freezing - in November. Stiff never gave me any advances, so I had loads of stupid jobs. I was working in the basement at St. Thomas' Hospital covering the pipes with some stuff. That was quite well paid, and one day the Queen came to visit the place and we had to stay down there until she'd gone. They wouldn't let us come up because it was really filthy down there. I always said after that that I'd had the pleasure of working under the Queen.

GH: So you weren't doing anything musically?

WE: Yeah. I was writing songs at the time. I ended up as a free lance gardener - I used to garden for old ladies.

GH: How did you get the name 'Wreckless'?

WE: It was just a question of everybody was being hoisted with names, like I wasn't all that keen on it, but everyone was being given these names - Elvis Costello, Rat Scabies, Captain Sensible, Laurie Driver, Howard Pickup, Gaye Advert. Everyone was being given stupid names. They did it to me as well y'know.

WRECKLESS ERIC

GH: You don't play much from your debut album any more. Do you then not feel too happy about songs like 'Personal Hygiene'?

WE: I'd probably do them again, but the thing is we've been restricted to going at the most an hour, and we need a lot longer to get all the songs in. So, I have

to play a lot of the new stuff because you don't make money out of going on the road. Going on the road is like an advert for your album. We've just lost £6,000 on the Squeeze tour. On one tour we played 10 gigs, sold out at every one, and lost £3,000

GH: Who decide to remix 'Whole Wide World' and 'Reconnex Cherie' on the US compilation album?

WE: The original mix of 'Whole Wide World' was very good, but slightly fuzzy round the edges. Bazza did that. We were in the studios late one night, some band hadn't turned up, and he'd always wanted to go at remixing it, so we spent the evening remixing it.

GH: Why does the personnel of the band change so fast?

WE: I sacked the entire first band. After the 'Out From Under the Wife's Feet Tour', I got Walter Hacon in on rhythm guitar, and in the meantime Brady left because we weren't working, and he's very much a live player. He got offered something else so he left, and rejoined, and left, and rejoined, and left and rejoined....we got Pete Gooling in. Pete left at Christmas to go and live in Switzerland, to teach guitar, because he's not really in to going on the road. So we've got Colin Fletcher now - he used to be in the Troggs. Geir Waade, who was on the 'Wonderful World' just wasn't good enough to be our drummer, so we sacked him.

GH: Do you see your present band as stable?

WE: I think so, yeah. We're thinking of getting a keyboard player as well. Malcolm Morley played keyboards on the album, but he's got a lot of other stuff going for him.

GH: Why did you do a cover of 'Crying, Waiting Hoping'?

WE: It was actually Pete Solley's only good idea. Me and Malcolm arrived at the studio a bit early and we were sitting in the corner playing all these old songs. He walked in and we were playing 'Crying Waiting Hoping' and he said it was great and that we should record it. I didn't mind them putting it out as a single. On the b side they credited the production to Malcolm Morley and I was so incensed because I'd stayed behind for an extra 10 minutes to mix it and get a demo out of it. They've never credited Malcolm's part of it ever again, they've always credited it to me every time it's come out anywhere.

GH: Why don't you tour more in England?

WE: We can't afford to. On the last tour we took out a huge PA which we couldn't afford. I never really thought about who was paying for it until about halfway through the tour. We lost so much money, and we'll obviously lose money again. We can easily get gigs, but we can't afford to play them - we'd look silly if we went out with a smaller rig, no lights.

GH: How much of your stuff is released in other countries?

WE: A lot. 'Hit And Miss Judy' was a number 1 in Belgium.

GH: What are your plans for the future?

WE: There's a lot I want to do. I want to do a rock 'n' roll album at some stage - none of my own songs, just covers. We'd put it out cheaply, and we'd probably change the name of the band - we'd all be on the cover with false moustaches and things like that.

GH: How do you rate the chances of your latest single, 'Broken Doll'?

WE: That's basically been put out to boost album sales. As long as you've got a single out the radio's got something they can put on their playlist. Obviously they can't put an album track on the playlist, so you don't get daytime airplay. I don't think it'll be a hit, that would be naive.

GH: Are you happy with the album sales?

WE: It's done well, because we've been on tour. It's the rest of the world that matters. I don't think there's much room for us here, in England. I know there's more room for us in America and Europe, and the album's in the lower reaches of the top 30 in Australia, so we should be alright.

GH: Has Stiff been pressing you for a hit single?

WE: Not pressing me. We've all agreed that it would be efficacious.

So there you have it - Wreckless Eric. He is not afraid to stand part from the trends, which at different times could have made him a chart star. He presents himself as he is, unashamed, and honest about his career, background and music. One thing is certain - after three albums he is still getting better all the time.

'Lost' Johnny Speed.

SLAUGHTER & the DOGS

MANUFACTURED
ROMANCE.

CRISIS

COCKNEY REJECTS

Manufactured Romance were first on, and appeared to be fairly talented but somewhat lacking in inspiration. Musically their punky / poppy numbers were good, but not really what was wanted by the audience of hard-core punks and skinheads, although they didn't go down badly. As support to two such powerful groups, Crisis fitted the bill excellently. Although the lyrics were to some extent political, the music was hard and fast and enjoyable, the better numbers were Holocaust (an Anti-Nazi anthem) and White Youth (an Anti-Racism number.)

Eventually the 'Rejects took the stage, but from the start their set was bedevilled with faults. Lead singer Stinky Turner tried to keep the audience amused, but really lacked the presence to keep us amused, 'though he led the skins in the audience through such delightful numbers as "I'm For Ever Blowing Bubbles", "Knees Up Mother Brown", and of course the inevitable cries of "Skin'eeeaads", 'though this little sing-song was interrupted a couple of times by the 'Rejects very self-ishly (?) playing a real 'Rejects song. All the best ones were there - I'm Not A Fool, Police Car, Bad Man, Are You Ready to Ruck?, Join The Rejects, Where The Hell Is Babylon? and lots more all cranked out at a breakneck speed sending us wild, and leaving us yelling for more long after they had finished their encore. Slaughter, by comparison, were a big disappointment. Although Slaughter were headlining, most people were there to see the 'Rejects, and Slaughter certainly didn't blow them off the stage, but they still weren't bad; not as lively as I had expected. They played many numbers which are apparently on their new L.P, and I can't say any of them inspired me with any desire to buy it, the highlights of the set still, predictably, being their two great classics - Cranked Up Really High and Where Have All The Bootboys Gone? which was part of their encore and saw them joined forcibly by a massive blonde figure, usually to be found singing with Zerox (Hi, Pete!) who was eventually chucked back into the audience. Anyway, not a very good gig, and with the Cockney Rejects, despite all manner of problems, being indubitably the stars of the evening.

E.S.

MEAN STREET BETWEEN PICTURES LAST GANG SPITTING IMAGE. LIVE AT THE ROCK GARDEN.

The Last Gang are an unusual and heavy three-piece group from Birmingham, who sound more than a little like Joy Division. I was quite impressed by their performance, and a little bit of detective work revealed that The Last Gang are:- Mick (vocals), Rob (guitar), and John (drums). They have released one single on Graduate Records and titled Spirit of Youth / Waste It All which I can recommend. All The Same, they couldn't match Between Pictures' performance. Although I have seen them give better performances than they did tonight, they were still brilliant. They rocketed through Jukebox Memory, Married, Virgin King and Sleepytime, their nervousness quickly fading as the audience proved to be lethargic but appreciative. Faces, Factory, Cut Me Out, Jersey and Life followed each other in quick succession, and I remember remarking on how much more confident and vital their live sets have become since I first saw them. Practice and Treat Me rounded off their set, but they were soon back to appease our cries for more with an encore of Postcards. I saw very little of Spitting Images' set, and it was not until afterwards that I even discovered their name, 'though it seemed to me that it was just for them to remain as anonymous as their music, for there are typical of countless bands doing the rounds of countless gigs.

Mean Street were headlining, 'though to my mind they didn't deserve to be. They played a fairly long set, and seemed un-necessarily cocky for five blokes who played such insipid rock-music. Nevertheless, the general lack of originality and colour was, to a certain extent, redeemed by a catchy encore, and the playing of what was clearly a fairly talented guitarist.

Anyway, all in all a varied and enjoyable night, and remarkable in that for almost the first time I have seen, a Reading group have done themselves justice away from home!

E.S.

I'm gonna strike a defiant pose against the life you chose

There ain't 'alf been some clever bastards.

ATHLETICO SPIZZ 80

No room for introductions, just to say that we spoke to Spizz, Jim Solar (bass), Dave Scott (Guitar), and C.P. Snare (drums), the missing member being Mark Coalfield (Keyboards). The obvious question first:

GH: Why do you keep changing your name?

Spizz: Spizz '77 started and then we had to change it in '78. We didn't like Spizz '78 - preferred Oil - Oil was big in the media. Changed from Spizz Oil 'cos the band split up. Then we became Spizz Energi - new band, new people. Spizz Energi went through so many line up changes. New decade, new name - Athletico Spizz '80.

GH: Would you agree that Spizz Energi was better than Spizz Oil?

Spizz: It depends from which angle you look at it. Musically it was probably better, but Spizz Oil had more spontaneity...not to say that Spizz Energi had no spontaneity.

GH: When will you be doing an LP?

Spizz: We're hoping to record one within the next four weeks. We'll take four days over it, but in which week I'm not going to tell you.

GH: What's it going to be called?

Spizz: It might be called 'Housewives and Labourers'.

GH: What about tours - have you got any lined up?

Spizz: We're going to Italy in a couple of weeks time but between now and then we're recording the album and then anything we haven't done when we come back from Italy we'll polish off in the studio for the album, then we'll probably do Scotland, then come back and do England or something...and Wales.

GH: Are you quite happy with Rough Trade or do you want a major recording contract?

JS: Next week when we make our album we'll see then. We might do it next week and we'll decide then 'cos if we haven't got any money left then we're going to have to go to some other label, possibly to get some money to finish it off, 'cos we might have to finance it ourselves.

GH: Do you think you've got any chance of making the charts whilst you're with RT?

Spizz: Captain Kirk did come pretty close, but because the BPI don't receive any money on Rough Trade I reckon they actually physically stopped it from getting any higher. It could have gone higher - sales prove it could have. It's the best selling Rough Trade single so far - getting on for 45,000 copies - and it's still selling.

DS: But it was a sustained sell, since December - it's been selling for 4 months.

GH: What was the promotional deal you arranged with William Shatner and why did CBS stop it?

Spizz: 'Cos they didn't want a small time company and a small band making any money out of their big finance film. (Star Trek). He was just going to fly over for 10 days promotion. We were just gonna bump into him, maybe take a few pictures for the Daily Mirror or something and that was that.

JS: It was basically CBS and Paramount that got together and said we don't want Spizz Energi or Rough Trade getting any capitol out of it. CBS marketed their own single of the Star Trek theme so they didn't want any contest.

GH: Why did you do a cover of 'Virginia Plain' for the b-side of 'Soldier Soldier'.

JS: It was the very first song we played together, at the beginning of '79. We said what do we all know and everyone knew Virginia Plain so we just did it straight away. We did it at gigs and it went down very well. We've always enjoyed playing it and it seemed an obvious choice. It's an easy song as well - there's only about four chords.

GH: Have you had any other offers from any other companies?

Spizz: They've rung us up saying um um we're interested in your band. How much? Then we've put the phone down.

GH: How did you get onto Rough Trade in the first place?

Spizz: Spizz Oil did a John Peel session and we took the tapes to Rough Trade of the session. They said um, record it and we went and recorded '6,000 Crazy'. That's how we got on Rough Trade. Then Spizz Oil split up and we didn't see Rough Trade for four months or so, whilst Spizz Energi came together and then we did another John Peel session and they said look do you wanna do another single and we said we liked 'Soldier Soldier'. They said OK, so we went and recorded that for Rough Trade.

GH: Does the sort of press you get bother you at all?

Spizz: No. We prefer fanzine write ups to media write ups, although media write ups do get to more people.

ATHLETICO SPIZZ 80

GH: Do you want to be big and famous?

Spizz: I just want to sell as many copies of our records as possible.

JS: We wouldn't mind getting in the charts or going on Top Of The Pops or Tiswas.

GH: How would you describe your music?

All: GREAT!

GH: Are you satisfied with the way things are going at the moment?

Spizz: No - never am. Pleased that it's better than yesterday, but otherwise....

JS: It's been quite a struggle and it still is and it gets more of a struggle as you go on 'cos when things escalate you have more to deal with.

Spizz: More's at stake so if you step out of line, the bigger clobbering you're going to get.

JS: We used to get very little national music paper coverage and we still haven't had a lot but the odd thing sneaks in and we're kinda glad something's happening at last, but You've got to think a lot more about about what you're going. Tonight a lot of people are being turned away and a lot of under 16s can't get in and we feel to a point bad about that. A lot of our fans are quite young and they can't get in the Nashville, the Marquee or the Music Machine.

Spizz: We've talked about doing Matinees. We've done it in Liverpool, but sadly it was beaten into the ground.

GH: You've just been to Europe - how did that go?

Spizz: We all got the runs or constipation and that just overrode everything, y'know.

JS: I didn't but I had a very bad cold instead.

GH: You went with the Modettes - who went down better?

Spizz: Well, some nights it would be a slightly more punky audience and where we would be more appreciated in a way and if we went on first in that situation the Modettes would get a good reception, but we didn't go out to beat the pants off each other. We had a party most nights.

JS: We took it in turns to headline.

GH: What are your parts in the film 'Breaking Glass'?

Spizz: About 3 minutes- if you blink you'll miss us. There's a backing band supporting Hazel O'Connor and Jim's on bass, Marks's on piano and someone spots Hazel O'Connor and says hey I could really do something with this band and takes her away and gets rid of us. I play drums.

GH: How did you get the parts?

Spizz: The director of the film was looking for small part actors and they just said come and look at some scripts, which we did, and we didn't like it. But then they changed it and we were cast as the backing band for Hazel O'Connor.

GH: (To C.P. Snare) You were once in the Members - what was that like?

CP: It was a different band really. The only person who was in it then whose still in it now is Nicky Tesco. The other three members left ie me and two others.

GH: Why did you leave?

CP: Well, I didn't really like them and there were problems within the group. I didn't like Nicky Tesco either.

GH: You once also played in a band in Reading, The Planets - what happened to them?

CP: Lack of gigs. Lack of money and that sort of thing. It was very hard to get gigs in Reading. We did a few gigs in London - the Moonlight and places like that. We supported the Vibrators at Bones once.

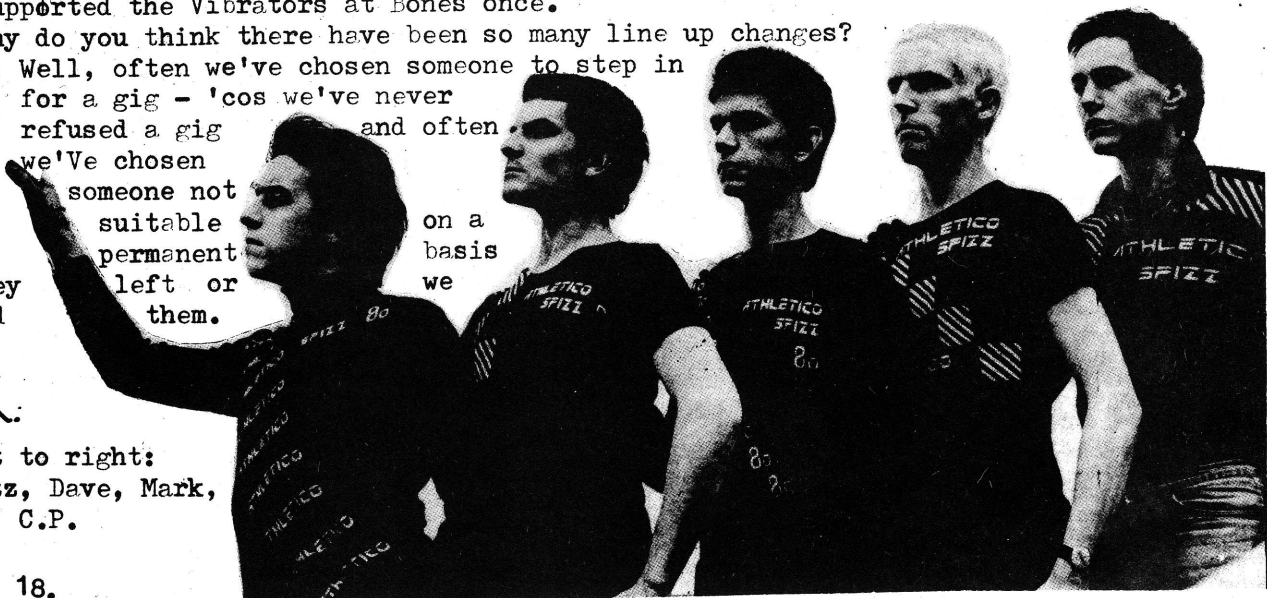
GH: Why do you think there have been so many line up changes?

Spizz: Well, often we've chosen someone to step in for a gig - 'cos we've never refused a gig and often we've chosen someone not suitable permanent left or so they sacked them.

on a basis we

C.K.

left to right:
Spizz, Dave, Mark,
Jim, C.P.



A FAST CROWD IDIOT DANCERS AT THE MONDAY CLUB.

A Fast Crowd played a typical set - musically ranging from heavy forceful and alarming numbers to more standard, repetitious punk fare, but all are infused with energy and personality and delivered with aggression and power. An interesting and lively bunch to watch, proficient without being professional, all they need is a little more confidence in their own ability, but manage to project their songs very well. The songs themselves are very good too, I have seen them a few times now, and can pick out some of the better numbers - P.A.U.L., Last Kid in The World and When The Bombs Come being among the best.

Anyway, let's move on to the Idiot Dancers. The name has got spread round quite a bit recently - thanks, to some extent, to their own efforts in putting ads in the classified columns of the weekly music rags. However, these adverts are lies - the Idiot Dancers do not dance; In fact they're not even idiots. What they are, in fact, is a cozy and fairly average little three - piece, musically somewhere inbetween mod and pop. They did a cover of the Rich Kids 'Burning Sounds', which was indistinguishable in style and tempo from their own compositions, so that'll give you some idea. Anyway, as I said, a fairly average group, but I was pleased to see the growing strength of A Fast Crowd. **E.S.**

JAZZ.

THE MONDAY CLUB.

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Two more fairly average groups on two separate occasions down at the Monday Club. Jazz, I think, are a local group and feature a sax. player who appeared to add nothing to the sound when he was on the stage, which was only about half the time. The Photographs are a Brummie group, not to be confused with Wendy Wus Photos, and not, despite what they maintained, as good.

It is possible that you have seen these groups, but you probably wouldn't remember them if you had - you know the type, the ones who stand ignored in a corner of a pub playing away, or playing a support spot while you're in the bar, not capable of evoking any sort of reaction, positive or negative. **E.S.**

GENERAL ACCIDENT AND JOHNNY AND THE MOONDOGS AT THE TARGET.



I've seen Johnny and the Moondogs so many times now, I suppose it was inevitable that I'd have to review them some time. The fact is, I can appreciate that they are a talented group, and the vocalist has the to sing classic vocals for this style of music (I think they call it Rock 'n' Roll) but, maybe I'm just biased, but personally I find this sort of music boring, vague and dodo-esque.

With Zer0x banned in Reading and most of Berks, G.A. are the best group to be seen around here. I've reviewed them so many times that it seems to be pointless, but we'd better keep plugging 'em 'cos they're a hard-working bunch who deserve to get somewhere. G.A. have always been faithful to their fans, and the number of familiar faces swells with every appearance. Tonight, as on every other occasion, they gave us what we wanted, even if Tramp was a bit subdued.

Elephants in Stilettos, Look Alright, and of course the single Computer Dating (If you haven't got it yet, hang your head in shame!) were given an airing, and if you don't know them yet, go to a G.A. gig now, 'cos you're missing a great group. **E.S.**

THE WALL

THE MONDAY CLUB

venue. When I bought their second single, 'New Way' I was a little disappointed with it, but tonight it really sounded great - far better than it does on vinyl, and they played both the b-sides as well - 'Uniforms' and 'Suckers'. They also played their first single, 'Exchange'. On several occasions, lead singer, Kelly, would plough his way through the audience to the back of the room and almost force people to dance, but his efforts were in vain. They certainly tried though, and they deserved a far better reaction than they got. In fact I don't think I've seen anyone put so much effort into a performance for a long time, and I can't wait to catch them again - hopefully they'll return to Reading soon in the future. The Wall were way above my expectations - if they can transform their live energy onto vinyl they'll be well on their way, 'cos they've got a few good songs up their sleeves. Hopefully they can do it.

< <

The man who pulls the trigger's not to blame.

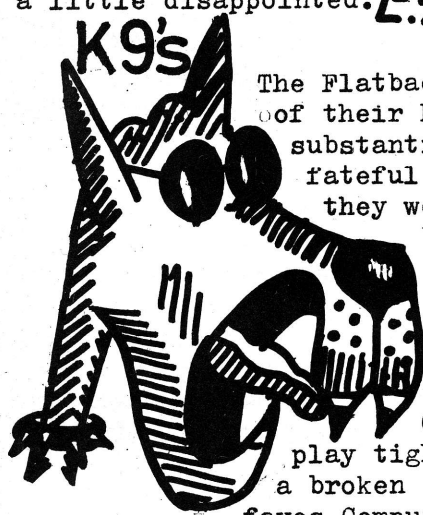
WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET.

You know there ain't no street like home,
To make you feel so all alone,
Plenty of folk to tell you what to do
But they don't speak the same language as you.

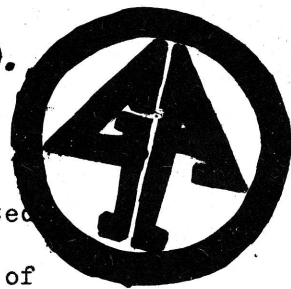
THE CRAMPS The Fall FASHION

Fashion were first on, and were as pretentious and arty as their name suggests, but the three-piece of Mulligan, Luke and Dik played some quite danceable numbers, in particular Citinite, Do It In The Dark, Steady Eddie Steady and Product Perfect. The Fall were next on, and after a long introduction, they broke into Fiery Jack. We went mad, but the group just stood there, in their ordinary clothes as if it was just a rehearsal. Their earlier numbers were, as on vinyl, the better ones, and a good balance was kept between old (Frightened, John Quays, Rowche Rumble) and new material (Flat of Angles, Heart Out, 2nd Dark Age), and some un-recorded ones were slipped in too (Scheme, Temperance, Plastic Man), as Mark E. Smith blurted out the lyrics with improvised spontaneity. Although not a powerful stage presence, Smith was clearly the driving force behind the Fall. The group were soon recalled to encore with ropstock, and, this task having been, very perfunctorarily, fulfilled, they strolled off again. What a contrast it was, therefore, between the unaffected and uncaptivating visuals of the Fall, and the elaborate theatricals we were to be treated to by The Cramps.

After a long wait, which was intended to be atmospheric, but was, in fact, just plain boring, The Cramps took the stage. Guitarist Brian Gregory was stood in front of us, and clearly deserved, as C.C. put it "10/10 for weirdness" - he wore womens high heels and tight black trousers with a glittering green spiral round one leg (C.C.?-P.I.). He rolled a fag menacingly round his mouth, and sneered at us through the white quiff which hung down from his greased-back black hair. WHAT A POSEUR!! We went crazy for the opening volley of Human Fly and Domino. Ivy Rorscach just stood there strumming her guitar and chewing gum with an expression of accustomed boredom; she looked like a whore in her tight gold trousers (what is this? a fashion parade?- P.I.). Nick Knox sat at the back, his drumming tireless and reliable, and as for lead singer Lux Interior, he was a madman, rolling about the stage, climbing up the speaker stacks and almost swallowing the mike as he belched out the lyrics. However, with the exception of Garbage Man, I was A Teenage Werewolf and the encore of The Way I Walk, all the Cramps' Psycho-Rockabilly tunes sounded the same to me, and when Gregory had smashed his pink-and-black spotted Flying V into the drums, and the group had stalked off leaving candles guttering on the amps, I couldn't help but feel a little disappointed. E.S.



FLATBACKERS.



The Flatbackers were first on, and despite the loss of their keyboards player, they sounded a lot more substantial than before, but they had made the fateful error of refusing to let Zerox play, and they were to suffer for it - the set was disrupted by cries of "ZEROX" as gob rained on the stage, and someone even let off a couple of smoke bombs, but the Flatbackers kept trying and trying - God they were trying. They even granted us an encore (Ta?) "For being a great audience", and repeated cries for Zerox were countered with threats of another encore!

General Accident were next on, and although I have seen them play tighter and more powerful sets, and the bassist was hampered by a broken string, we all appreciated the chance to dance to our old faves Computer Dating, Julie etc.

As for the K9's, well, this was just a rehearsal for their real farewell gig, which promises to be a real event, and they weren't taking tonight too seriously, or putting too much into it. Nonetheless, we all went mad for all the old faves - Dose of The Clap, New Rose, Sweeney Todd, Idi Amin etc. etc. They had to stop at one stage, when the number of people jumping on the stage caused the amps to fall over, and we had to wait some time while they were repaired. Still, The K9's were as much fun as they always have been, and the split-up of such a great group is clearly a great loss for Reading. E.S.

CRISIS THE LAZERS THE STRAPS

THE MONDAY CLUB

This was the second time I'd seen both Crisis and the Straps within a couple of weeks. The Straps were first on. They delivered a half hour set that was good, but not amazing, and they failed to get the audience moving, which was much to their annoyance - "Is Reading really this boring?" They deserved far more than the rather apathetic reaction they received. 'Brixton' was dedicated to all those people in the audience from Brixton (cor! really? - Pi) "cos no one else seems to care". They ended cataclysmically with 'Violence Sex Disaster'. In my previous review of this group I'd said they'd probably be better in a much smaller venue. Well, I'm not so sure now - at least at Hammersmith they had a large stage on which they were able to thrive. If they'd have done every song like the last then they would have been brilliant, but for the rest of the set they were less stunning. Still, they certainly never gave up their attempt to get some sort of reaction from the audience, who were indifferent towards them.

The Lazers were better received, though this was probably only because some members of the audience were familiar with some of their numbers. They're probably best described as a pop/punk band, and they provide nothing but pure genuine fun, with numbers such as 'Try So Hard', 'Compromise' and 'Don't Understand', although unfortunately they didn't play 'Coming Out'. A group worth catching if you get the chance.

After the Lazers' set had finished chaos developed. Zerrox had been billed to play, had dropped out at the last minute, but had now turned up and wanted to play. They therefore took over the Lazers' equipment and played one song, with the pogoers at the front going wild. Despite cries of "Zerrox" they were allowed no more.

Crisis were last on. Having seen them twice in such a short space of time I can tell you they are pretty average really. They're fairly good to watch and their songs are fairly good too ('PC 1984', 'White Youth', 'WhatsOn TV', and the brilliant 'Holocaust'). They managed to do what both the Straps and the Lazers had previously failed to do, and that was to get the audience moving. I'd certainly like to see them again, as they provide good entertainment, and it was a generally enjoyable evening. <<

WASTED YOUTH

THE MONDAY CLUB

First of all let me introduce you to the band. They are: Ken Scott (guitar and vocals); Andy Scott (drums); Mick Atkins (guitar); Daren Murphy (bass); Mick Nicholas (keyboards). Their music is very much Velvet Underground influenced, and in what seems to be an attempt to imitate their heroes they put on pretentious American accents, although in a recent Sounds interview they claimed to have dropped this habit. Each song was preceded by long, contrived introductions, which really irritated me, especially as they were trying so hard to sound American (god knows why) "Hey man, that's really cool, y'know" seemed to be their ultimate phrase, amongst others pulled straight from an American phrase book type mental dictionary.

As for the music, well some of it was good, some of it was awful. 'Do The Caveman Stomp' was one of their better numbers, but 'Wasted Youth' was terrible. They didn't play their single 'Jealousy', but most of their numbers seemed to be reasonably listenable, except for the one or two exceptions, which were quite diabolical. As for the visuals they were hampered by the small stage, but they coped adequately with this problem, although the overall affect wasn't what you'd call stunning. They're supporting the Only Ones when they come to Reading (which will probably have happened by the time you read this), and I should imagine the extra space available to them will lead to a slight improvement. If it doesn't they've got problems, for this is something they could really improve on. If they did this, and dropped the American accents, and their few weak numbers they could be bloody good. We'll just have to wait and see, but for now they're not really up to much. <<

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FANX

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The Wall, Athletico Spizz '80, 'Lost'
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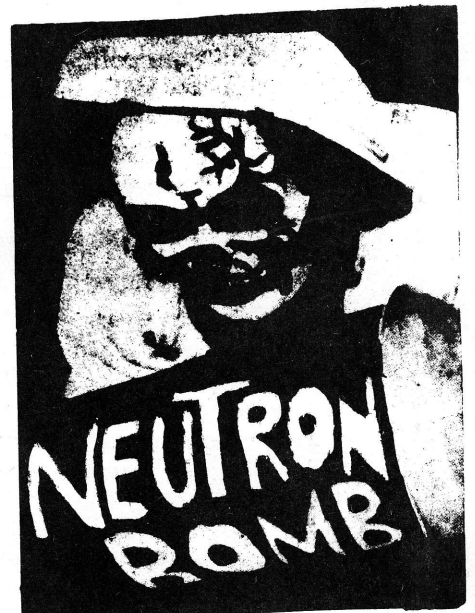
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The persons that waste their time on this fanzine are: Captain Callous, Eddie Snide and
(to a lesser extent) Pig Ignorant. who wants to waste time on you scum? £